

The Rhythm of Life

Poems by

Rhoda Walker Edwards

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Mary Mellich
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Memorial

The Rhythm of Life

Poems

By
Rhoda Walker Edwards



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Mary Mellish
Archibald
Memorial

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To
EDMUND

“ His was the very sweetest soul
That ever looked through human eyes.”

Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.

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not to send a word of
hail to you for 7 months
"Mistress of life". You are
a true hero of all the
dark mines!

With kindest regards to your Mother
Sincerely,
Ed. Sherrill

THE RHYTHM OF LIFE
AND OTHER POEMS

THE RHYTHM OF LIFE

THE rhythm of life is love, dear
The rhythm of life is love.
You may look where you choose for the
rhyme, dear,
But the rhythm is fashioned above.

It may be as soft as the lulling wind
When it sways with the meadow grass
In a far-a-way nook, near a babbling brook
Where only the blue jays pass.

It may beat with the waves on a jagged rock
It may dance on the ocean spray
It may lurk unaware, in a lock of your hair
When you're combing the gold to grey.

It may come to you crowned with a halo of light
It may come to you dim with tears
God pity the one that is hid from its sun
And may God bless the heart that it cheers.

For the rhythm of life is love, dear
The rhythm of life is love
You may look where you choose for the rhyme, dear,
But the rhythm is fashioned above.

DUSK

WHEN Day in bashful awe weds Night,
And throws her veil athwart the light,
To hide the blush of setting sun;
Dusk draws the shadows, one by one,
Across the purple hills afar;
And memory lights the evening star.

PRAYER

LORD give me strength to fight
Though the losing cause be mine
With the weaker and the right
Keep me abreast the line
And though the word accord
But a failure mark to me
Let others rise, O Lord
Through my Death to Victory.

TENEBRÆ

I AM groping in the darkness of the tenebræ
of death.

Jesu miserere mei, for I feel the Spectre's
breath

And the fear of the Eternal breaks in sweat upon
my brow.

Jesu miserere mei! Send Thy Angel to me now.

I am stumbling through the shadows of the Land
of the Unknown,

I am trembling in the Valley where my soul must
walk alone

And where Death has set his finger on my heart, I
feel the chill

As I wait, O God Almighty, for the signal of Thy
Will.

Lord, how awful is the moment of the darkening
of my day,

When my spirit sinks in terror at the losing of the
way,

When the Past stalks up behind me, when the
Present shrinks from sight,

When the Future looms before me in the tenebræ
of night.

Lo! I hear the tocsin sounding for the trinity of
time!

Lo! The bells of the eternal are beginning now to
chime!

Jesu miserere mei! In the mercy of Thy might
Take the soul in anguish groping—out of darkness
—into Light.

O MERCIFUL NIGHT

THE glare of the day burns into my soul
like iron white hot,
The voices of living things strike on my
ear like beings besot,
The hideous laughter of life that I loved, that was
yesterday mine,
Today has turned hateful, and strangles my soul,
like some poisonous vine
That clings in insidious mockery, sucking the while
The sap of the tree it embraces. So earth has
grown vile.
So everything radiant tortures the heart that is
broken, hurting the sight
Of eyes that have wept till they sting with the
glare of the light.

O Merciful Night

Clasp me close in your arms, wrap around me your
shroud
Let silence reply though my heart cry aloud,
For the Earth and the Quick must be dumb, when
the Dead walk abroad
Lest they startle the spirits that recently only
have soared

Past the confines of dust; who would pitying
return

In the darkness of night, for a moment's sojourn
With the living they loved, with the loved ones
who grieve,

Seeing not through the curtain Death only can
cleave.

O Blessed Communion of souls rent in twain
Immortal and mortal in converse again;
No clock counts the hour, no minute marks time,
Save the belfry of Heaven which only can chime
The sacred suspension of tides—the Between—
Of the Dusk and the Dawn—of the Seen and
Unseen.

Ah! Ye of the day—of the glare—of the light—
Guard ye your slumbers—leave mourners the
night.

To us do the stillness and darkness belong,
We have suffered in silence, in grief we are strong.
On the ladder of sorrow our spirits may rise
To wrestle with angels, to win through our sighs
Our way to the stars, where departed ones stand
Waiting to clasp us again by the hand.
Where they who have answered life's problems
at last

Shall teach us to fear not the Shadow they've
passed,
The Shadow called Death, that is wrapped in a
shroud,
The Sentinel Silent, who stands with head bowed
At the gateway of life, there collecting his toll,
Demanding of each who would pass him a soul.
O Spectre who claimest such tribute divine,
What then may be ours? Is everything thine?
Art thou the Origin? Art thou the End?
Art thou a skull, or a Deity's friend,
Or art thou a veil between us and the Light,
A curtain of comfort, O Merciful Night?

DEATH

THEY libel you, sweet Death, who call you
fearsome,

Death gentle as the dusk that falls
So softly o'er the garish day;
Closing our eyes to all that hurts them,
Guiding our tired feet to Mother Earth
That we may rest within her arms
In some cool spot, where flowers are born
And birds sing lullabies.

I fear you not, sweet Death, nor will I shrink
When clasped within your masterful embrace.
My pulse vibrates to yours,
My heart beat hesitates—then synchronizes
With Eternity.

THE BORDERLAND

WHERE Heaven and horizon meet,
A resting place for tired feet,
Such is the Borderland called Death.
Where memory fades with bating breath
We linger for a last good-bye
And dreaming that we live, we die!

So silently the summons came,
So tenderly they called our name,
So mystical the twilight's spell,
So gradually the darkness fell,

We scarcely knew when leaving Earth
How Dusk to Dawn had given birth.

BURNING LEAVES

BURNING leaves rising like incense to
Heaven,
Prayers of the past and loves that lie dead,
Bitter sweet memories burning leaves kindle,
All of the summer of life that has fled.

Rake up the scattered emotions of pleasure,
Rake up the sorrow strewn over my path,
Build me a fire of yesterday's gleanings
While I am waiting for Life's aftermath.

Tender the Springtime; but harsh is the Winter.
Purge me my shivering soul of its blame,
Burning leaves rising like incense to Heaven
Carry my quivering heart in your flame.

SESTINA

I WATCH the firelight slowly die away
As my life's embers in their smouldering glow
Upon the hearthstone of my fading day
Reflect the splendor of the long ago,
Not in the burst of flame of colors gay,
But quivering sadly like a throb of woe.

Thus wondering I question whence the
woe
That grows the keener as life ebbs
away,
Until it seems I knew it long ago
When youth was breaking into perfect
day,
When in my soul ambition was aglow,
When life was love, when hearts were
young and gay.

Although till now Love's memory was gay,
Today it brings a numb and nameless woe
That will not though I strive be cast away;
Yet all is mine I craved once long ago,
My proudest hopes are realized today,
Only my heart returns no answering glow.

Was it for this, that in the fervid glow
Of my ambition I did turn away
From all the joys life offered long ago,
Did bid adieu to friends and comrades
gay
That I might win a lofty lonely woe,
The name—the fame—men offer me
today?

I bade Love leave me when it came one day,
Lest its own flame devour ambition's glow,
Love sadly, at my bidding, turned away.
Success now brings me but regret and woe,
The vision that was clad in raiment gay
Is but the spectre of the long ago.

I dreamed of quaffing nectar years ago;
The goblet has been drained by me
today
But Time has cooled ambition's ardent
glow.
'Tis sad to drink without my comrades
gay,
The chalice seems to mock me in my woe,
As from my trembling hand it slips away.

It fades away, the dream of long ago,
The heart once gay has learned in age the woe
It chose the day it quenched Love's sacred
glow.

IN THE SPRINGTIME

I HAVEN'T a sou in my pocket, nor a crust of
bread have I;
But there's gold in the gorse on the hillside,
there is wine in the western sky,
And light is my heart as the pack on my back,
And the sap of the Spring in my tread;
For the buds are bursting with rapture, as the
lark calls its mate overhead.
O I sing for the joy of living; with only the birds
to hear!
Who gives for the joy of giving, has treasury gained
more dear,
Than the wealth of the mine, or the pearls of
the sea.
Ah! The fragrance of locust is wafted to me
On the breeze from the trees,
And the river runs clear with its message of cheer
In the springtime.

DREAMS

IF all the dreams we dream, dear,
 should happen to be true,
If half of what we dream, dear,
 Should come to me and you,
Or just suppose a single one
 Were granted us some day,
If that one were a fond one,
 We'd dream our lives away.
 If all the dreams we dream, dear,
 Should vanish in a day,
If not a single one, dear,
 Should ever come our way,
We'd dream on just the same, dear,
 Though the fairies might not stay,
And dreams would be as sweet, dear,
 For what they are today.

DESPAIR

AN endless stretch of ocean coldly grey,
A shrieking gull that's hovering o'er its
prey,
A crumbling cliff of granite, crushed by waves
That chisel monuments for sailors' graves,
A boundless and inexorable sea,
Unfathomed undertones of misery.

THE STAR

HOW can I love a star
That in the black firmament above me
Pins its brilliance?

Shining to dazzle, not to warm nor gladden

Nor even light the path for me on earth.

Rather the torch of pitch-pine,

That leaps into fire and burns itself for me,

Living, quivering, glowing flame of love

That serves me in my need.

Close to my heart I hold you,

And if my stumbling feet shall find the dawn,

'Tis you and not yon distant star

That guides me.

O ATHEIST

O ATHEIST! Arrogant in the emptiness of
your conceit,
Tell me before you banish God from this
His Universe,
Tell me the measure of a man.

What is it that becomes incarnate at his birth,
What is the dissolution, known as death?
Read first yourself,
And when the riddle of your own existence
You have solved,
Then fathom God.

THE MIRACLE OF SPRING

IN unbelief, we cry, give us a sign,
Yet every Spring Christ wakes the sleeping
earth
Which in obedience to his Voice Divine
Shakes off the shroud of winter, and gives birth
To life.

“She is not dead, but sleepeth,” He repeats.
Which is the greater miracle of these,
The girl arising from her winding sheets,
Or, at His Word, the bursting of the trees
To life?

THE INSECT

GREATER than the forest it devours,
Master of man which it destroys,
Giver of life and giver of death,
It saw the Dawn of Earth
And it will linger
Till the last man is forgotten.
How insignificant are we
And how stupendous
Is the Insect
If this be all.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE

WILLIAM MCKINLEY, *President*

WE are pitied by the Powers that but
yesterday were awed
By the glory and the truth writ in our face,
We were mighty among nations in the presence
of the Lord

As we stood in all the greatness of His grace.
In the splendor of our Union we have risen as a man,
All the world has felt the strength of our accord;
We have known not shame, but valor since America
began,
We have had no stain nor tarnish on our sword.

But today the world may pity, what all history
must know,
That an outrage to a Country's sacred trust
Has most foully been committed and the measure
of our woe
Is a Nation's voice that's calling from the dust.

Through the muffled march of ages where the dead
are walking on
Pass a trio that are shrouded in our shame,

While their brows reflect the glory, where their
martyrdom has shone,
In their eyes there is the sorrow of our blame.

Let the Country give the laurel which the Nation's
chief has won,
Let the world look down in pity on his bier,
For a good man's life is ended, and a great man's
work is done,
But a century's page is blotted by a tear.

THE REPROACH OF THE DEAD

WAS it for this, that in the joy of manhood
You cut us off from all that we held
dear;

Snatching from youth the joy of life untasted,

Was it for this that we lie buried here?

Was it for this that Flanders' fields are bloody,

Was it for this that widows weep today,

Was it for this that mother's arms are empty?

THE DEBT YOU OWE THE DEAD, YOU'VE YET
TO PAY

Where is the Peace we gave our lives to purchase?

What has become of justice, truth, and right?

Have you so soon forgotten why we perished?

Have your ideals vanished with the night?

Was it for this we died; that slackers gluttoned

With their ill gotten gains should make parade

In vulgar ostentation of their riches,

Coined from the sacred sacrifice we made?

Was it for this? Ah! If it were, then dying

We but became the victims of your greed.

Worse than the horrors of the blood-soaked
trenches.

Is your betrayal. This is hell indeed.

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER SPEAKS

YOU have honored the bones of the Unknown Dead,

You have hung a wreath on his marble tomb.

“Without stone whereon to rest his head”

Is many a living hero's doom.

Have you heard the voice of the Unknown Dead

When you knelt with others beside his grave;

“Where are my brothers who live?” he said,

“All that I offered they also gave.

You called them heroes and spoke the truth

When you led them out of the sun to fight;

For you they squandered their splendid youth.

They are destitute in their blinded night.

They were stalwart lads when they heard your call,

When they offered their bodies to be your shields.

You asked for their strength—they left it all

With their shell torn limbs on the battlefields.

You have used them up and thrown them away,

You have drained the sap of their life in a day,

And the medals you gave, they have pawned to pay

For a crust of bread, when you said them nay.

They are staring at you with their shell shocked
eyes,
These ghosts of the living who also bled,
They are yesterday's heroes, whom you despise,
On guard at the tomb of the Unknown Dead."

THE SILENT SEA

SUBMERGED rhythmic beauty, and the silence of the sea!

Crimson tendrils clinging to the rock.

Starfish and anemone,

Silver breasted arrows darting swiftly here and there,

Slender swaying seaweed, lifting trembling fingers

To the sunlight on her hair,

As she floats like flotsam drifting

With the cadence of the sea.

DÉBRIS

SHE was so fair at dawn, when her bare feet
Danced lightly on Life's highway.
Daintily she trod the dust, scattering
flowers as she went.

At dusk—footsore and weary—

She sank beside the roadway.

As she sobbed,—the passers-by

Pelted her with stones.

BROKEN BLOSSOMS

IT was so ruthless, the breaking of that blossom
That touched your cheek and coaxed you
To inhale its fragrance as you passed.

Did its soft petal sting you with its sweetness,
That you should snatch it from the parent stem
Only to crush it and fling it to earth
To die?

THE PITYING PINES

'TIS the croon of the pitying pine trees
That are rocking the dead to sleep,
'Tis the shuddering wail of the wind
trees;
Reap, dread harvester, reap.

Lest they that are dead should awaken,
Lest their souls should remember and
weep;
For the sake of the lives ye have taken,
Guard ye the dead in their sleep.

'Tis the croon of the pitying pine tree,
'Tis the sob of the hearts that weep,
'Tis the minor lament of the wind trees;
Sleep ye slumberers, sleep.

AUTUMN

A MOURNFUL whispering, in the air,
A murmuring sadness everywhere,
The leaves are falling from the trees
And there's a sighing in the breeze,
Sweetheart.

I wander o'er the lonely sands,
I call in vain with outstretched hands,
Until I know the heaving sea
Is one eternal sob for thee,
Sweetheart.

CAPRI

A CROSS the Bay Vesuvius fumes with a
soul's unrest,
Pompeii, burned to ashes, lies dead at
her behest,
But like a star gemmed flower that has floated out
to sea
Is the windswept sunkissed Island, that is known
as fair Capri.
As a bride she sits in beauty, with orange blossoms
crowned,
A sparkling sapphire girdle around her waist is
bound,
And they who see her smiling through her veil of
moonlight beams
Have found at last, in Capri, the island of their
dreams.

THE TOAST

I DRINK to thee, Iconoclast of my believing youth!

Thou hast destroyed the idols that were mine;
And wrought out of the shattered structure, of
what once was truth,

The débris of this worthless world of thine.
This Godless, loveless plane of accident, in which
I am

An atom flung by chance across a sphere,
How can I curse such cruelty, since there is none
to damn

Thy deviltry? Nor is there left a tear
Within my arid breast, to mourn the passing of
my soul.

Scarce adolescent, I have reached the brink
Of nothingness, and scorn to run a race without
a goal.

Rather the cup of poisoned wine, and drink
Satiety. The sterile flower withers in the Spring.

Since there may be no fruit upon my tree,
I choose the deep abyss of death; and loathing it,
I fling

The carcass of my soulless self to thee.

MINSTRELSY

THO' I be clad in tatters, without roof above
my head,
The stars are mine forever, and the sky
my house instead.
The wild bees share their honey, when I ask for
daily bread;
The sunrise lights my hearthstone and the sunset
keeps it red.

I take the lilt of laughter in the singing of the
brook,
The blush of the arbutus in a lonely leafy nook,
The tears that lie unheeded on bedraggled meadow
grass,
The hush of frightened forests when the Storm
King wants to pass.

I gather up the twilight and the love-notes of a lark,
The evening star that glistens, when the greater
light grows dark,
I weave this filmy fabric on my lyre all day long,
With silver threads of moonlight in the pattern of
a song.

SUPER COURAGE

STRANGERS praise and laud you to the skies
Because success has crowned your enter-
prise.

More to me than laurel you have worn
Has been that look of suffering nobly borne,
I alone have fathomed in your eyes
When honest failure sternest courage tries.

FOR ME THE TEAR

LET others share your smiles, I'd not repine
Though all your joy to strangers should
belong;

They may partake of laughter and of song,
But let the tear you shed alone be mine.

PRESCIENCE

THE cloud of silent snowflakes, like a maiden's bridal veil,
Conceal the face of nature in a mist o'er hill and dale,
So still the storm, so steadfast like our troth in wedlock vowed,
That we know not of its coming till our garden wears a shroud.
Like these stealthy falling snowflakes, around us from above,
The fatal veil is dropping o'er the mystery of love.
My life is fading out, dear, a sweet weight bears me down;
'Twas death that kissed my forehead when I donned my wedding gown;
As flowers dream of summer while they sleep beneath the snow,
So shall my soul remember, in that land where spirits go.

AFFINITY

I WALKED abroad among my fellow men
seeking I knew not what,
With a dread sense of self that bore me down
And weighed upon me like the weary load that
Atlas carried.

I knew not what I sought; yet felt impelled to
search.

At all the multitude that passed me by I looked
Until my eyes, arrested by your own, grew blind
to self,

My weariness dropped from me as a cloak
And in that lightning spark of our affinity
I knew you as a body greets its soul
When death meets resurrection.

TO A POSTHUMOUS CHILD

WHAT is this Ego? Whither? Whence?
Where is he now, who lived but yesterday?

Whence comes the babe that yesterday was not?
Soul of our soul, flesh of our flesh,
Love's trinity in one art thou,
Whose tiny voice vibrating from sphere to sphere
Had not yet reached our world, ere his was hushed
forever.

Now is my heart dying within its breast
Even as his mold melts into its elements.
Now is my mind reflecting but the thoughts
That dwelt therein, while yet the loved one lived,
They call him dead! Ah! far more dead am I, his
weaker self,

Existing—but not living—torn this way and that
Twixt the life that was and is no more
And that that was not—yet clamors now to be.
It seems I hear him urge me fling away
This vile excrescence—self—that separates us,
He bids me follow him—I question, where?
He answers not—an anguish of suspense—
And lo! A voice calls from infinity,
An infant's cry, that sounds love's reveille.

BABY AND I 'NEATH THE REDWOOD SHADE

BABY and I 'neath the redwood shade,
By a babbling brook in a verdant glade,
Are playing a game with Father Time
Who is as spry as in his prime.
When he throws away his scythe to play
With a new born babe, on a summer day,
There is no furrow upon his brow.
For the weight of the world is off him now,
He can romp as well as any boy;
Of his long white beard he makes a toy
For a baby's fist to pull at will,
While the wheel of the world for a turn is still,
Scholars, heroes and statesmen, too.
What have baby and I to do with you,
What does it matter, what you call fame,
While we are playing our perfect game?
Wouldn't you give all your gain to be
Just laughing at Time with my babe and me?

HOUSE O' MY HEART

HOUSE o' my heart, with its roof bending
low
To converse with an overgrown garden
Of years along ago.
Years before ivy had climbed up so high
On that chimney, or crept in to listen
To winds as they sigh,
Moaning like ghosts down the mildewing halls,
Where the bats beat their wings in their gropings,
Against sagging walls.
House o' my heart where the hollyhocks press
Wet white faces at rainstained windows,
In loneliness.
Grasses have hidden the pathways that led
To the gate that we fastened behind us,
And leaves that are dead
Stir as they lie on the roadways that part
When a breath from the lilac blows o'er them,
O House o' my heart.
House o' my heart, fading out of my sight
In the silvery mist of the twilight
That deepens to night.

A WHITE ROSE

K. A. W.

THEY laid a rose upon her breast
Before they carried her away,
A single rose upon her breast.
The fragrance of that rose today
Is just as bitter-sweet to me
As tho' it fresh beside her lay.
So place no living flower near me
When my last sleep shall bring me rest,
But let me dream if dream I may
Of one white rose upon her breast.

THE EMPTY ROOM

To "MATER"

THE empty room filled still with your sweet
presence,

The empty room where once you lived
and loved and suffered,

Yet suffering, filled our lives with gladness,

Who basking in the sunlight of your smile,

Guessed not the depths of anguish

Whence your soul had garnered treasure

To lavish upon us.

How empty seems your room!

Tho' permeated with a subtle perfume

Distilled like rarest attar

From the crushed petal of a rose.

And in the silence of this empty chamber

I think I hear the rustle of an angel's wing.

SURSUM CORDA

OUT of the din of the man-made town
Into the fields of God,
Over the heather of ruddy brown
Sweet as the fragrant sod.

Out of the city of noise and dust
Into the silent wood,
Out of the heart there is rubbed the rust,
Life for a day is good.

Restful the sky through the tree tops seen,
Gone is the lurid glare,
Only the leaves in their shimm'ring green
Whispering softly there.

Out of the stillness a bird note rings,
Out of the heart a prayer,
Something within me awakes and sings,
Born of the sunlit air.

Out of the city of pain and strife,
To peace that we used to know,
Out of the hurrying years of life,
An hour from long ago.

TRIOLET

'T WAS a halo of smoke in the air
That the sun lent an iris hue,
It flickered and faded there,
'Twas a halo of smoke in the air.
But I loved it, for it was fair
As the dream that I dreamed of you,
'Twas a halo of smoke in the air
That the sun lent an iris hue.

TO AN OLD-FASHIONED PORTRAIT

YOU'RE an old-fashioned girl, in an old-fashioned frame,
With an old-fashioned dress, but the face
is the same;
You have beauty and dimples, and ah! what a smile,
Half pleading, half teasing, half yielding the while.
You have eyes that confess, while the lashes conceal,
The love that I'm longing to know if you feel,
You've just the same look that there is in the face
Of the girl I adore. You've her every grace,
You've even her torturing, mocking disdain,
And methinks her dear heart, that I'm yearning
to gain,
Distracting, entrancing, the woman's the same—
Though her grandam you are in that old-fashioned
frame.

CAPRICE

TO everyone around me, my smile is just the
same,
My glance as tender, and as sweet, my
stress upon each name.
Each doubtless thinks I love him, yet no coquette
am I;
Subconsciously I play the part and all who love
know why.
One face I see before me, one voice I always hear,
No matter who is with me, I dream that he is near.
So when I look and when I smile, I look and smile
at "him,"
Though sometimes there's a heartache that makes
my eyes grow dim,
But when my love walks with me, my glance dis-
traught and cold
Shall hide my foolish secret, till he his own has told.

BLUE-EYED MAY

A bewitching coquette was blue-eyed May,
So they told me. I said I'd defy her.
But when she stood just in my way,
Tell, pray tell me, how could I pass by her?
And when I asked for just a spray
Of the blossoms which she carried,
'Twas only their fragrance that led me away,
Yet May and myself are married.

IN THE HEART OF A CHILD

FROM the mountain top, I have called, O
Lord,
With the cry of a soul's unrest
Out of the depths of the valley,
Pursuing a ceaseless quest.
Where the wise of the earth were gathered,
I have listened to their debate,
But there have I never found Thee, Lord,
Nor again on the thrones of the great.
I have studied the works of science,
Philosophers I have read,
The query they asked is unanswered,
The thinkers who pondered, dead.
Hast Thou abandoned Thy creatures, Lord,
Is the work of Thy hand defiled?
Laus Tibi! No, I have found Thee, Lord!
In the heart of a little child.

THE CONVENT GATE

WHEN I was but a little child
I stood within the Convent Gate,
As magic visions past me filed
And beckoned me to meet my fate.
I was impatient then to learn
Where led the Road beyond the Gate,
I watched my comrades in their turn
Pass out while I had years to wait.
O blessed years too swiftly sped,
Years full of tenderness and truth,
With what relentless feet you fled
And hurried me beyond my youth!

I passed the Gate and saw the Road
Had many pleasant winding ways,
The world I found a sweet abode,
But ne'er forgot I, Convent Days.
Now as my sorrows, one by one,
Stalk towards me on the lane of Life,
When shadows stretch with sinking sun
And courage falters with the strife,
My trembling feet would fain return
Along the pathway of the years,

While at the Convent Gate I yearn
 To lay the burden of my fears.
I may not pass within the Gate,
 For Time has set a barrier there,
So on the other side I wait,
 And send my heart back with a prayer.

THE BEGGAR

BECAUSE he could not see the filth in the gutter
He sat content upon the curbstone,
Making music for a deafened world.
The beggar raised his sightless eyes to Heaven,
And seeing there a vision that was fair,
He touched the strings so tenderly
That, in the jostling crowd, one paused,
Hearing above the din and turmoil of the street
A long lost chord of music.
He fumbled in his sable coat,
And dropped a coin into the blind man's hat.
He saw the beggar smile, but the beggar saw not
the anguish
In the eyes of the other.

THE CRICKET AND THE NIGHTINGALE

ON the terrace, where a fountain played,
A lordly nightingale gave forth
Its full-throated pæan of praise,
While the sun-dial drew a shadowy finger
Across its marble face in ennui.
In the tangled copse where lowly insects
Shimmered o'er the singing brook,
Where bullfrogs paused upon the mossy logs,
And lingering daylight blushed upon the leaf
A humble cricket chirped in ecstasy.

LIFE'S LULLABY

THE twilight shadows 'round her figure grow,
They play about her locks of silvered hair,
The same old elfin friends that frolicked
there

When she and love one summer long ago
At dusk sat idly rocking to and fro.

I wonder do these shadows know or care
What mask her part in life was cast to
wear,

Or how she played its comedy or woe?

Was gladness brought with each succeeding year?
Ah! If it were then closer round her creep
Dear shadows, whispering memories in her ear.

But should remembrance serve to make
her weep,

Be silent. Let oblivion dry the tear,
While, in the dusk, she rocks her life to
sleep.

OVER THE WORLD IS A HUSH

OVER the world is a hush! Angels are
guarding your bier;

Out of the night comes a sob, out of the
heavens a tear.

Why do they say you are dead? Spirits like yours
never die,

We who remain are the dead, waiting to live by and
by.

Oh! For the smile that I loved! Oh! For the
touch of your hand.

Can you not take me with you, into that happier
land?

Over the world is a hush. Angels are guarding your
bier;

Out of the night comes a sob, out of the heavens a
tear.

DE GRÂCE NE CHERCHEZ À
COMPRENDRE!

DE grâce! Ne cherchez à comprendre!
Hélas! Le Bien-aimé est mort!
Jamais ne pourrez vous entendre
Les accents de celui qui dort.
Au grand jamais, un soupir tendre
Pour vous son cœur ne respira
De grâce! Ne cherchez à comprendre!
Ou raison même vous fuira.
De grâce! Ne cherchez à comprendre!
Pourquoi ce pitoyable sort
A peine peut—on le jour attendre
Ou moins cruelle revient la Mort.

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Mary Mellish
Archibald
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